



What is a Legal Lot?

A “Legal Lot” is a parcel of land that has been created in accordance with the subdivision, short subdivision, or other land segregation laws in existence at the time that the lot was created. The building and land use requirements for legal lots are organized according to the way the lots were created or divided, by the date, and by other relevant criteria. Note that while a “Tax Parcel” is usually also considered a Legal Lot, there are circumstances in which a Tax Parcel is not considered a Legal Lot.

Know Before You Build

Before a property owner can build or subdivide, a lot must meet the requirements of a legal lot as defined by [King County Code, Title 19A, Land Segregation](#). Proof of a legal lot is required before a permit application can be accepted. Although a parcel may be determined to be a legal lot, other requirements will apply, including, but are not limited to, applicable zoning, health, and building site criteria, as well as compliance with all land use ordinances.

Proof of a Legal Lot

Proof of a Legal Lot is the responsibility of the person claiming legal lot status. Acceptable proof presented to the King County Department of Permitting and Environmental Review may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following documents:

- Recorded copy of the plat or short plat
- A copy of the King County approval for unrecorded subdivisions of four or fewer lots
- A deed, or historical tax record dated prior to October 1, 1972
- A letter or notice from King County previously recognizing a parcel as a legal lot
- Other reliable documentation that clearly demonstrates that a parcel satisfies the requirements of the King County Code Title 19A.08.070, Determining and maintaining legal status of a lot.

Legal Lot Determination Service

Property owners may request that DPER determine the legal status of a parcel(s). The property owner is responsible for providing adequate documentation to support the legal lot status. The fee for this service can be found in the current fee guide for [Preliminary Plat, Boundary Line Adjustment, Other](#).



Other Documentation

A request for legal lot status of a lot(s) created in a plat recorded prior to June 9, 1937 will also require submittal of proof that indicates that each individual lot was either conveyed or taxed separately and that they have been provided with approved sewage disposal, water, or roads.

Current tax statements and records, assessor maps, survey maps or other historical records alone typically are not sufficient proof of a legal lot, except where these records satisfy the requirements of King County Code Title 19A, Land Segregation for the recognition of a legally created lot.

Locating Documentation

The information that property owners need to prove legal lot status generally is not available at the Department of Permitting and Environmental Review office. Resources include:

- Records Pre-Dating 1973: Washington State, [Puget Sound Regional Archives Office](#) in Bellevue
- Older deeds may be available from a title company
- King County
 - Records and Licensing Services, [Archives](#)
 - Records and Licensing Services, [Recorder's Office](#)
 - [Department of Assessments](#)
 - [Interactive Mapping, iMap and Parcel Viewer](#)

References

[King County Code, Title 19A, Land Segregation](#)

[King County Green Building Handbook](#)

